

Protective Order

A protective order is a civil order that helps stop violent and harassing behavior and helps protect you and your family from an abuser. Protective orders are available to people who were involved in a dating relationship, family members, or household members in situations where family violence has occurred and is likely to occur in the future.

A protective order may prohibit an abuser from (1) committing family violence; (2) directly communicating with a member of the family or household in a threatening or harassing manner; or (3) going to or near the residence, school, or workplace of people listed in the order. A violation of any of these provisions of a protective order is a Criminal Offense.

Interviewing Hours

NOTE: Interviews are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Monday – Friday 8 AM – 3 PM

Family Criminal Law Division
1201 Franklin Street, 2nd Floor, Suite 2160
Houston, Texas 77002
713-274-0212

Mailing Address:

Harris County District Attorney's Office
Family Criminal Law Division
1201 Franklin Street, Suite 600
Houston, Texas 77002

Checklist

Important Things to Take When You Leave

Identification

- Driver's license or other form of identification
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Work Permits/VISA
- Assistance Identification
- Passports

Financial

- Money, debit card, credit card
- Bank books and checkbooks
- Public Assistance documentation
- Pay stubs for both you and your abuser
- Loan information

Other Important Papers

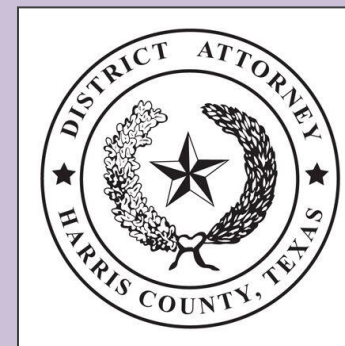
- Your Protective Order
- Lease, rental agreement, or house deed
- Health and life insurance papers
- Medical and vaccination records for you and your children
- School Records
- Divorce and custody papers

Other Items

- House and car keys
- Medications, glasses, hearing aids
- Address Book
- Phone cards
- Family photographs
- Children's toys
- Change of clothes for you and the kids
- Pet items
- Other: _____

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

FAMILY CRIMINAL LAW DIVISION



Remember: Each situation is different. Safety suggestions in this brochure are general. Contact a domestic violence hotline for a more specific safety plan.

National Domestic
Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE

Safety if Living in a Home Where Violence May Occur:

- Decide and plan where you will go if you leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which door, window, elevator, or stairwell would be best.
- Have a packed bag ready and keep at a trustworthy relative's or friend's home.
- Identify one or more neighbors who you can safely disclose the violence to and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word or signal to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- If you believe an argument/incident is going to occur, leave if possible. If not, try to move to a room where you have access to an exit and/or a phone. Stay away from any room without an outside door or window or a room with items that could be used as weapons such as a kitchen or garage.
- Use your own instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, do whatever is necessary to be safe. This may mean giving the abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down.
- Keep your cell phone with you at all times.
- If necessary, call "911" for help.
- *Remember – You Do Not Deserve To Be Hit, Threatened, or Live In Fear!*

Safety When Preparing to Leave:

- Contact a domestic violence hotline to discuss your safety options.
- Open a savings account and/or credit card in your own name.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, and clothes with someone you trust.

- Determine who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- Keep the phone number of the 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline close at hand and keep some change or a calling card on you at all times for emergency phone calls.
- Review your safety plan to plan the safest way to leave your batterer.
- *Remember – Leaving Your Batterer Is A Very Dangerous Time!*

Safety with a Protective Order:

- Keep your protective order on you at all times. Give a copy to a trusted friend, family member, or clergy person. Keep a copy in your car.
- Give a copy to your children's school and daycare.
- Call the police if your batterer violates the protective order.
- Think of other ways to keep safe until law enforcement arrives.

Safety in Public or at Work:

- Tell your co-worker(s), boss, and/or office or building security about your situation.
- Provide a picture of your batterer.
- Devise a code word to use to communicate that you need assistance.
- Screen your calls.
- Devise a safety plan for leaving work. Have someone escort you to your car or bus and wait with you until you are safely on your way. Vary your routes home.
- Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.
- Change your work routine.

Safety While Using Technology:

- Be careful about MySpace or Facebook accounts. Abusers can easily find out what you are doing and who you are talking with.

- Create new email accounts. Do not create or check this new account from your home computer in case it is being monitored.
- If your abuser sends you threatening e-mails or text messages, save and print them.
- It is virtually impossible to clear where you have been on a computer. In fact, trying to clear the history could actually tip off your abuser to your plans. Try to use a safer computer at a library, community center, or other public place to find needed resources.
- Protect your email and voice mail passwords and PIN numbers. Change them often.
- Minimize the use of cordless phones for sensitive conversations. Older models can be intercepted with a scanner or baby monitor.
- Cell phones can be used to track your location. Contact your cell phone company to make sure your cell phone cannot be used in this way.
- Make sure there are no GPS or tracking devices on your car.

Safety for Your Pets:

- Keep emergency provisions for your pet if your abuser withholds money from you.
- Keep the phone number of the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic.
- Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail (e.g., obtain a pet license, have a vet put records in your name and have a copy of your pet's medical records).
- Contact your local SPCA to see if they have a program to help keep pets safe.

24-Hour Resources:

Crisis Hotline (713) 228-1505
National Domestic Violence
Hotline (800) 799-SAFE